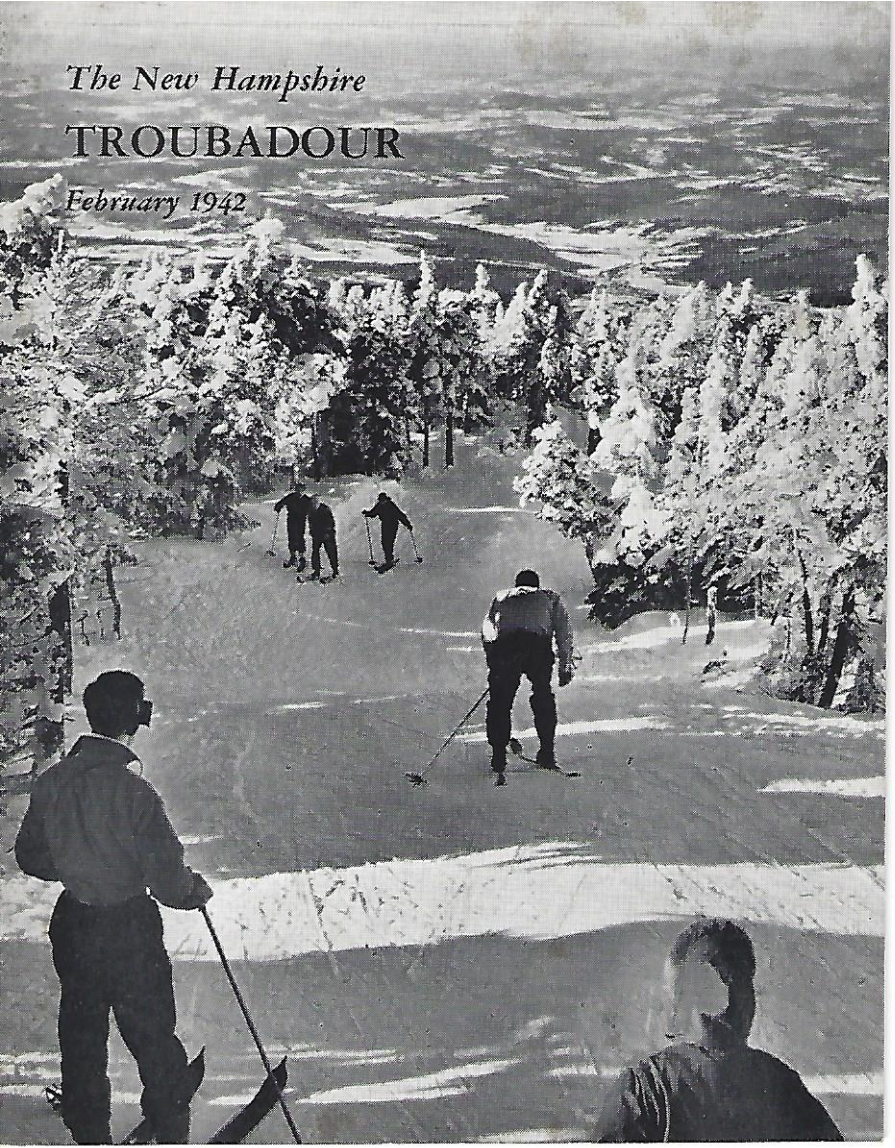
The New Hampshire

TROUBADOUR

February 1942



A. J. VIERA

"By magic touch our world transformed
To Fairyland — a place apart,
Where sparkling and glistening snow
Can strangely cheer and warm one's heart."
— FRANCES LOGAN *in "Winter Magic"*

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE TROUBADOUR

comes to you every month, singing the praises of New Hampshire, a state whose beauty and opportunities should tempt you to come and share those good things that make life here so delightful. It is sent to you by the State Planning and Development Commission, Concord, N. H. 50 Cents a Year

DONALD TUTTLE, EDITOR

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Snow Days

By LOUISE OWEN

We came in very late that night — from where it does not matter, and I do not remember. It was a dark night, without moon or stars, and the panes of our windows were so black that they might not have existed.

But outside the windows were bushes, and we regarded them with amazement.

"Look," we said, "see the hydrangeas! They are in blossom!" They leaned toward the glass, immense, perfect, full-blown flowers, not moving at all. The whole great bush, one before each window, that in the daytime, all summer long, transmuted the light in our room to green shadow, now deflected the darkness, broke it into bright fragments, with those enormous pyramidal white blossoms.

White as snow: and not strangely, for of course they were no more than snow. The bushes that in the afternoon had been frail and empty now wore heavy-headed flowers wherever the ghostly, papery relics of summer had been before. As the snow had fallen,

WINSTON POTE

No gasoline or tire rationing worries for these Jefferson youngsters and their pony express

hour by hour, they had blossomed more and more resplendently, going in one evening through the intricate process of budding and blooming that usually occupied a fortnight, indeed a whole season.

It was one more manifestation of our New England winter miracle. People who live in cities where snow is merely an annual economic problem, or in places where it does not fall, can hardly imagine or believe what it can be like. It is joy to children, of course; and essential to sportsmen — to hunters, skiers, tobogganers. There is the functionalism of March snow, when the season comes for that unrivalled delicacy, maple sap which has been boiled until it is no longer syrup yet not quite sugar, poured out hot on

clean snow and turning instantly to an incomparable confection. There is the snow of April that flies when robins sit in the budding trees like out-of-season Christmas ornaments; that's the snow called Poor Man's Manure, beneficent, evanescent, leaving the grass suddenly green and the fields soft and radiant. But the pure, otherworldly beauty of a deep snowfall — the immaculateness of the fields — the prickling of trees with a million points of frosty light — that is something which even to see year after year is almost not to believe.

On the whitest days, after storms of twelve hours, twenty-four hours, and often enough much longer, there is incredible color, brilliantly refracted or softly reflected, according to the time of day Where apple-trees huddle into orchards, where saplings stand drawn close into themselves like people shivering, every shadow on the snow is blue, almost the color of gentians. Shadows of houses are blue, pencilled shadows of fences are blue. Early mornings, everything is blue: before dawn, while the trembling prisms of planets are still hung high, the light is indigo, and as the stars melt, it is transmuted into sapphire, and the sky is sapphire, and the snow; then everything imperceptibly becomes azure; then there is sky the color of turquoise, and sunrise like azaleas, and where the snow is not gold and rose, it is white again, too white to look at. Late on winter afternoons this world of snow gives depth and translucence to the sunset sky: across field and pasture that roll gently upward to culminate in the sky itself, falls a wash of lavender and apricot; the west of apricot and apple-green, the east of rose-pink and mauve, sweep together to meet in the silver zenith. Day after shiny, magical day such phenomena of light and color go on — which is probably the reason why everyone within seeing distance does not stop and stand transfixed at the flaming and fading of breathless beauty.

But even more moving than the spectacle of sky and snowfield, sunrise and twilight, are the nearer minutiae of winter loveli-

HARRISON FISK

Winter scene in Center Sandwich; Methodist Church in distance

ness: great dazzling banks of snow on either side of plowed country roads, wave-like crests of blown drifts, the whorled and patterned piles of white that heap against snow-fences, the beautiful gradual curves of hemlock branches black under their unshaken loads of white, the exquisite footprints of birds and tiny animals, the long irregular trails through fields where children's feet have left their mark, the light that flickers and skips over sunlit snow like animate erratic diamond molecules. In the garden is the tall, spare ghost of a solitary hollyhock, standing with the clean snow stretched all around it; it bends in a meditative parabola, and when the wind

touches it barely, it swings so that its finger-tip inscribes a little scrawl in the snow, one line rewritten and again rewritten. . . .

The stillness of a winter day with snow falling! The tender quality of the gray sky, soft and uniform and without sheen; the relaxed immobility of the black trees; the untroubled look of the whole world, as if it were quietly putting on white feathers, great white wings, that would quietly lift it up, away, into remote and dreamless immortality! Surely this peace, this quietness, must be forever, this armor of white feathers be unassailable and impenetrable. There are harsher ways and more cruel to end a world than by encasing it in the perfect beauty of snow and ice, and so of slumber, without dreams or waking, never again to be gnawed to the heart by the hidden fox of spring.

In Which a Home Is Found

By ELIZABETH YATES

We used to talk about living in the country — when trucks and busses rumbled past our door; of the quiet of the hills — when horns and sirens ripped night's stillness. It was good to talk about. Once we even went so far as to make a list of all the things a country place should have.

"Of course, it must be a farm, a real farm."

"Yes, of course. A little house and a big barn, gray and old, with stalls and stanchions and a hayloft and a barnyard."

"There should be a meadow for sheep to graze in."

"And some woodland with big trees and quietness, where we can make trails and see deer in the winter-time."

"There must be a brook."

"Where should it be?"

This 120-year-old house in Peterborough

"Oh —" that was difficult to say. "In the high country, anywhere, so long as hills roll up to the sky and the little villages have white houses and pointed steeples."

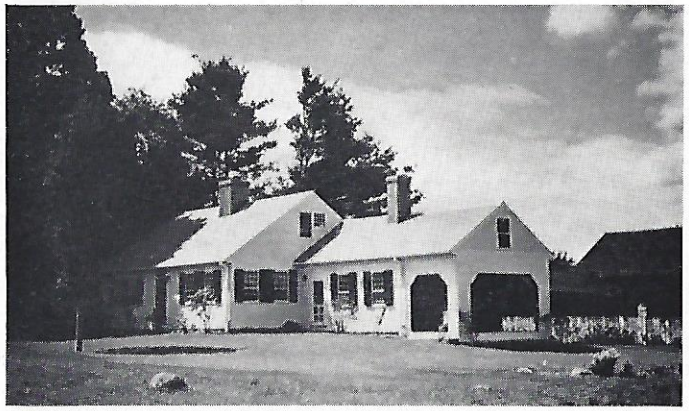
* * *

Well, at least geography had some bounds. It was not to be by the sea, much as we loved its space and roar and rhythm; nor was it to be in the wide reaches of flat country.

"Near a village," we added, "say a mile or so away; so we can walk to town for the mail and friends can come to see us."

"And on a good road," we added, thinking of snowy winters and of how much better it was to be able to get in and out than to be imprisoned by snowdrifts.

So the list stood before us — small house, big barn, meadow, woods, brook, hills, village, road. It did not seem excessive, except that it happened to be everything.



becomes the charming home "Shieling" of this story

"What shall we call it?"

Romantic names came to mind — "Land of Heart's Desire," "High Heaven's Gate."

"No, a name must be a secret thing. The farm must name itself and those who come to it will learn its meaning."

So we made the list, and sealed it with desire, put it away in a desk drawer and forgot about it.

* * *

And we grew fond of cities, such good places in which to work, to make friends. So nice to get away from in the summer; so cozy to settle down in through the winter. Libraries and museums and theaters and parks. Then there was the beauty of changing seasons and another beauty that leaned, not on the time of year, but on the time of day — mornings with people going briskly to work, evenings with lamps shining on dark pavements.

But a time came when experience, as it were, said: "See, you can choose where you will live!"

And there was only one answer: "The country."

* * *

So the search began. It led circuitously, but always toward the hills. There was a village we knew — not too far from the city, so there could still be an easy going back and forth upon occasions. It was in high country, too, where wooded hills in gentle curves rose up to meet the sky. There, after a while, we discovered a farm — a house and a bit of land, sixty-seven acres-more-or-less, as the old deed said.

We looked at the little house, one shining winter day, and it did not say to us in a questioning way: "So you have come to see me? I wonder if you are going to like me." But: "Here I stand for you."

A hundred and twenty years it had been just there. By its doorway a maple had grown tall and strong, and at its side a row of pines caught the wind and turned it into music. The little white gate in the picket fence had opened and shut so many times that its squeak was a happy one.

* * *

With as much ease, it seemed, as if one were offered a plum and put it expectantly to one's lips, the house became ours. There was plenty of work to be done which we shared with carpenters and painters. And there was an almost daily joy of discovery. At some time in its more recent past the house had been "improved"; it was for us to make it true to itself again. So fireplaces that had been boarded up were opened — revealing hand-made bricks, long and slender and rosy in color, square tiles on the hearths and blackened cranes. In one room, paneled walls covered with many coats of paint were patiently stripped, until the wide boards of native pine finally glowed forth in all the richness of their

WINSTON POTE

One of the State Highway Department's giant rotary plows gobbles up the deep snow and blows it off the road

natural color, soft and compelling to the touch, like the smoothest silk.

One side of the house stood near the road, banked by lilac. In front of the house an apple orchard of gnarled trees grew gay with blossom. In the old gray barn behind the house swallows came to nest, darting in through an open window with long wisps of building material in their beaks. The grass grew green in the meadows around the house. In the woods across the small valley, where the brook raced in springtide exuberance, the maples and beeches and birches were bright among the dark pines. Violets

lifted their heads from the moss and lady's slippers carpeted the ground. Often before we had exclaimed — as did Emerson — over a single lady's slipper. We had not dreamed ever to see a pink cloud of them raised from the ground like a magic carpet.

* * *

One thing was certain. It could not be "it," or "the little house," much longer. A name was needed. We thought of dozens, but they were either too romantic or obscure or obvious or ordinary. Then one day the house itself (for none of us can remember pronouncing it) said: "Shieling."

"So few will know what we mean," we argued.

"Perhaps they could learn its meaning."

We tried not to accept it. We tried desperately to think of something else. But it was no use. The house had called itself "Shieling." The swallows overhead sang of "Shieling." The young shavers that lived in field and wood belonged to "Shieling."

"What *does* it mean?" we were asked.

"It's a Scotch word," we tried to explain.

"It means a little house in a clearing, a protecting place where one may be shielded or sheltered from the weather." But, oh, there was so much else to say! "It comes from shield, because long ago a shield was a shelter. It goes back through Gaelic to the Icelandic." Then the words of the old Ballad of Lizzie Baillie came as final persuasion:

"To be with thee in Hieland sheil
Is worth the lands o' Castlecary."

One day, some weeks after we had moved in and "Shieling" had become home, we found a slip of paper tucked away in a desk drawer. It was a list we had made years ago and quite forgotten. It noted the essentials for a home in the country. Checking them against reality, we found that "Shieling" had them all.

— *Christian Science Monitor*

Welcome

By Joseph Wentworth

On winter evenings we frequently visit with our guest book, which, during the vacation months, rests in a crude, home-made box on a stone wall under a black walnut tree near our summer home and at a spot, slightly off the highway, commanding a sweeping view of the Sandwich Range.

For twenty years we have shared this view and our fields with all who choose to come. Using the guest book as a guide, we estimate that there were about four thousand visitors from June fifteenth to October fifteenth in 1941, most of whom we do not know excepting through the medium of our guest book.

Throughout these years all visitors have been welcome to roam wherever they desire without restrictions of any kind. They come on pleasant days and on hazy days to get the changing shadows on the mountains. Some come to see the sunset. Some come on moonlight nights. Others come to sketch or paint. And not once have flowers, fruit, vegetables or pets been harmed. These visitors picnic where they please, but never have we found even an olive stone as a reminder of their presence.

Our guest book contains registrations from nearly every state in the Union and from many foreign countries. Beneath the signatures interesting and gracious comments are often added, and sometimes an artist sketches a picture of a part of the panorama, with the purple martins' houses or the wooden pump in the foreground. Apparently all enjoy the view and the freedom, and their pleasure is always our pleasure.

As a result of our pleasing experience for so many years I wonder if "No Trespassing" signs may not operate as something of a challenge, while a gesture of welcome may tend to bring God's people to God's Country — the lakes, the hills and the mountains of New Hampshire.

FRONT COVER: Richard Taft Ski Trail practice slope near summit of Cannon Mountain, Franconia Notch.

BACK COVER: Fox tracks in fresh fallen snow. Both pictures by Winston Pote.

We have a waiting list of about fifty people who are anxious to complete their *Troubadour* files. Chiefly in demand are the first three volumes, April 1931 through March 1934. Have you one or more spare copies of any of these issues?

The New Hampshire State Police have a two-way radio system which permits direct conversations between the cars of the State Troopers as well as with the headquarters at Concord. All of the large police stations and most of the law-enforcement officers of the state have radio receivers tuned to the same frequency so that they receive all of the police messages.

When Lawrence Philbrook of Shelburne was a small boy, one of his father's maxims was, "There are two things you should not worry about — those you *can* help and those you *can't* help."

GREENVILLE, N. H. — (AP) — The 65 public-spirited citizens who helped this town make a comeback learned today that they were going to be rewarded for their good deed.

They subscribed $30,000 in 1939 to make possible the reopening of the town's only mill, which had been closed two years.

John F. McCuddy, Secretary-treasurer of the Columbian Real Estate Company, announced they would make a profit of $65 on every $100 invested.

The real estate company was formed after a newly-organized Greenville Mills, Inc., announced it would take over the old Columbian mills if the town would buy the mills' 55 tenements.

When no buyer could be found, a group of 65 raised the required $30,000 in 10 days.

Today, all but six of the tenements have been sold and the mill is employing 250 persons in manufacturing rayon.

The 65 investors already had been paid back $75 on each $100 share, in addition to dividends of $20 a share. Another dividend of $45 will be paid December 15.

When the last six houses are sold, McCuddy said, a final $25 dividend would be paid and the real estate company would be dissolved.

Congratulations to "Pa" Conlon on his 70th birthday this week. The former director of Camp Belknap is now probation officer in Lebanon and keeps up his life work of being a friend to young people.

He tells us of a recent case in the Lebanon court. The defendant pleaded guilty to a charge of drunkenness, begged to be let off, promised to take the pledge.

After a huddle with the probation officer the judge said to the prisoner, "You say you'll take the pledge? I understand that only last week you took the pledge, at the court in White River Junction."

"That's right, Your Honor," replied the man, "I did. But that was only for Vermont."

— *The Milford Cabinet*

"My wife and I have climbed a great many of the New Hampshire mountains the last ten years, and I have brought down from the top of 60 New England's highest mountains a rock from each, weighing from 15 pounds to 40 pounds. I have these at my place in East Washington all numbered with copper plates, and intend to put them in a fireplace that will be built in our porch in a few years, for we have not stopped gathering rocks, and it is too early for us to quit enjoying the beauty of the New Hampshire hills."

H. B. HALLAS
Newton Center, Mass.

Stephen A. Douglas had been abused in the Senate. He arose and said, "What no gentleman should say, no gentleman need answer."

May the God we trust as a nation
Throw the light of His peace and grace
On a flag with its stripes untarnished,
And with every star in place.
— JOHN CLAIR MINOT.

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WINTER JOURNAL

By Louise Owen

The silver sky is quiet as light;
  The crystal trees are still and stripped.
The new snow stretches out, a bright
  Illuminated manuscript.

Here are the delicate pencillings
  Where chickadee and junco were;
Here the faint marks of brushing wings—
  A partridge flew, an owl stooped near.

A paragraph of little prints
  Tells where the cat went, light of foot;
And capitals that leap the fence
  Declare the dog's wild lusty route.

In notes like music, deer went here —
  And down along the lower half
Of the white sheet, amused, austere,
  The red fox set his autograph.

Courtesy of The Yale Review.
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